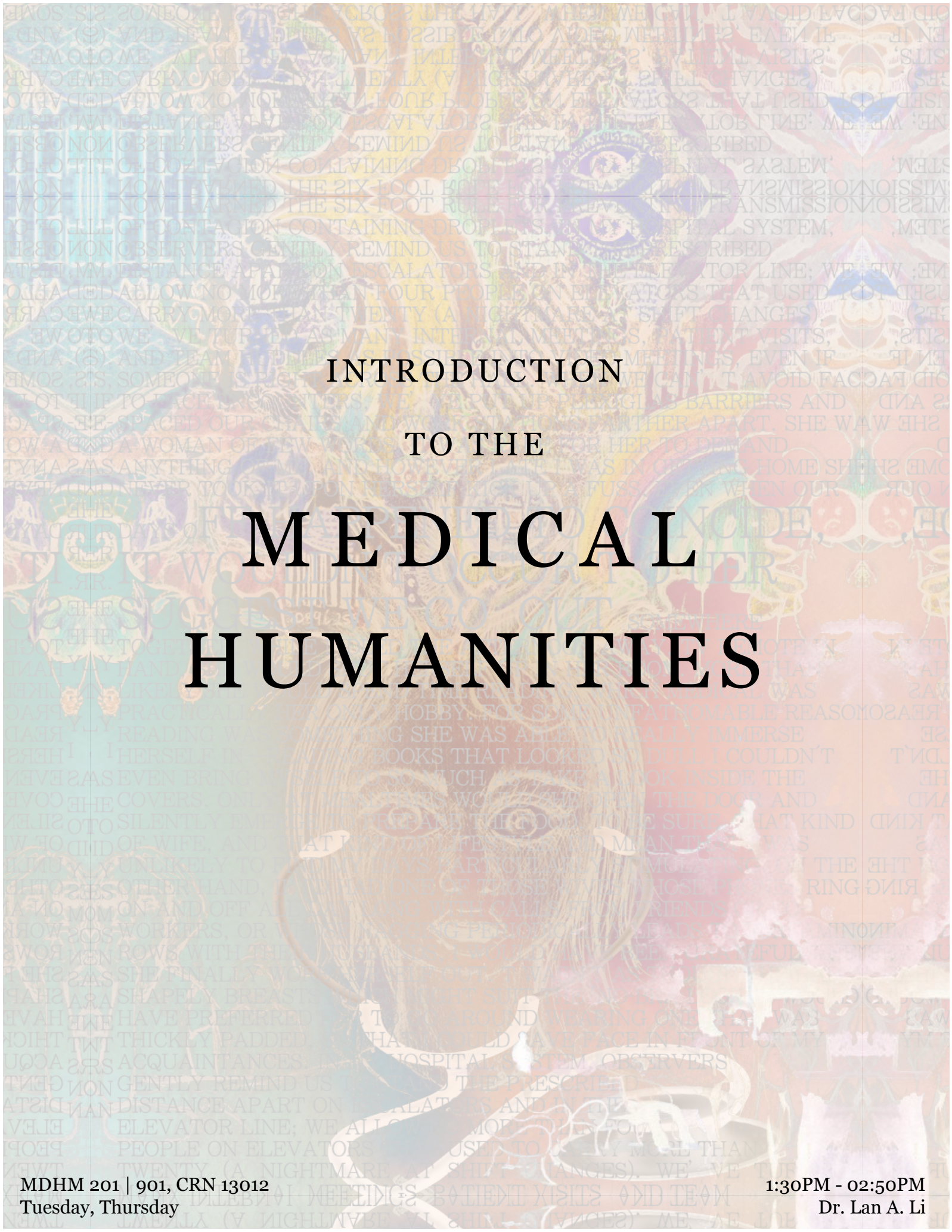

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

MEDICAL HUMANITIES

MDHM 201 | 901, CRN 13012
Tuesday, Thursday

1:30PM - 02:50PM
Dr. Lan A. Li

Introduction to the Medical Humanities

MDHM 201 | 901, CRN 13012
Tuesday, Thursday 1:30PM - 02:50PM

Instructor: Dr. Lan A. Li, LL@rice.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays 3-4pm & by appointment
Virtual Office: whereby.com/LL2419
Assisted by: TBA

Where to meet:

Tuesday Lectures:	https://rb.gy/iieu2e
Thursday G1 Room:	http://rb.gy/bs8mbl
Thursday G2 Room:	http://rb.gy/taozh9

Welcome!

So, you want to be a doctor. Or not. Maybe you want to help people and being a doctor seems like the best option—the most noble, the most respectable, the most gratifying. Yet, there remains an entire constellation of problems in health care that exist beyond the reach of the individual physician. These problems are socioeconomic, infrastructural, financial, political, legal, technological, practical, racial, cultural, and emotional. They entangle the patient and the practitioner. They manifest in issues of health care disparities. They become glaring in limits to one's ability to access to health care. They creep up in narratives of medical paternalism.

This introduction to the medical humanities aims to address the world of health care beyond medicine. It engages with scholars in literary studies, history, anthropology, art, science studies, sociology, philosophy, and media studies who have wrestled with many facets of medical practice. We will survey a range of topics in the medical humanities, interrogate genres of representation, and explore different research methods. The topics in this course will move in three parts. We first begin in the hospital, then enter the world of patients, and finally open up to communities of care. With each passing week, we will examine one major topic in medicine and link it a major framework in the humanities. We will interrogate both the content and form of a piece of writing, performance, or film that explores important issues in health and healing, such as discrimination, gender, illness categories, disability, economics, and religion, among others.

You will develop skills in analyzing the politics of expertise and gain a better understanding of institutional politics of medical research that shape patient experiences. By the end of this class, you will learn to be critical of narratives of "care." Where do we take the dual realms of medicine as being able to both help and harm? If you decide to become a health care professional, which communities would you serve? What kinds of shifts do you want to foresee? What conceptual and practical tools will you need to realize those shifts?

Learning Outcomes

In this course, you will learn how to **1)** describe the historical, literary, artistic, and ethical domains of medical humanities scholarship; **2)** analyze and evaluate complex texts relating to the social and cultural aspects of medicine through close reading and critical interpretation of arguments, metaphors, and images; **3)** explain how health disparities and disability shape the healthcare experience for patients; **4)** conduct independent research and communicate your own arguments about medical humanities in research papers, class presentations, and discussions.

Class Logistics

Attendance

Time Zones: All students who live **four or fewer** time zones away, are expected to attend every class synchronously, either in person or via Zoom.

All students who are living where the time zone is **greater** than 4 hours from the central time zone are expected to either attend class synchronously via Zoom or to work out in advance with the instructor a suitable solution for asynchronous attendance.

Showing Up: Students attending class synchronously via Zoom are expected to arrive to class on time (e.g., within 5 minutes of start time). This is essential because links/docs posted in the Chat window and are only available to students who are present at the time the links are posted. *Links will not be reposted to accommodate students who arrive late.*

If you are unable to attend a class, please notify the course TA beforehand.

Participation

Zoom Etiquette: Students are expected to be actively engaged in the classroom. During lectures (**Tuesdays**) use the chat [or raise hand, unmute, etc.] when you have questions or would like to participate. During discussion section (**Thursdays**), please keep your video camera on and microphone muted.

Students needing an accommodation for using their camera or microphone should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss and work out needed adjustments.

Group Work: In this course, you will be members of two different groups. The first big group is your discussion section, which will meet on Thursdays. Your second group will be meeting for your Final Project (detailed below), where the class will be divided into 10 groups of six. We will finalize these groups based on time zone, should that be an issue, within the first two weeks of class. During group meetings, you should have resources to screen-share software, Google docs, and the Canvas conference room to review each other's work. You will also be paired within groups to peer-review each other's work.

Participation is about collaboration. Participation does not only include contributing to discussion, but also collaborating among your peers. To be a reliable peer, make sure to critically engage with the readings so that you can evaluate your peer's work with a robust intellectual arsenal. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask each other!

Grading

- Participation 5%
- Responses 20%
- Peer Review 15%
- Final Project Part 1: Write 10%
- Final Project Part 2: Propose 10%
- Final Project Part 3: Outline 15%
- Final Project Draft + Submission 25%

Late Policy

Three Days: You are allowed a total of three days extension to be applied across the semester as you wish. For instance, you can use one day for each assignment, or three days for one assignment.

Should you require an extension beyond the three years, please request one in person or by email **at least two days** *before* the assignment is due. If you request an extension the day before the work is due or on the day it is due, there must be extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness or a family emergency) or your grade will be reduced by a third for each extra day (A to A-, B+ to B, etc).

Academic Integrity: Rice Honor Code

This course encourages collaboration and peer-editing, but ALL WORK needs to be YOUR OWN WORK! Direct quotes need to be properly cited and referenced. You are all held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, which you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/ Failure to properly cite all incorporated material is plagiarism, WHICH IS VERY BAD.

Office Hours

I encourage you to attend my office hours. You might use this time to as questions about course assignments, discuss lingering questions you may have about the readings, seek help with strategies for close reading and participation, discuss connections between course material and your world, or get help connecting with campus support services. If you live in a time zone that makes it difficult to attend the weekly posted office hours, email the instructor to make an appointment.

Waiting Room: If you enter the Whereby chat when another student is in the room, you will be directed to a waiting room.

FAQs: If you have questions relevant to the entire class, please post them on Canvas in the FAQ section so that either the instructors or the other students can reply. If you have an individual question, please email **BOTH** instructors (the primary faculty and the TA).

Assignments

Responses

You will be assigned up to 30 pages of reading for each class. Reading responses are due before midnight on Canvas before every Tuesday and Thursday class. These are meant for you to raise questions about concepts that might be unfamiliar to you or ideas that you'd like to discuss further. You are required to submit **ten responses total**. Extra responses will be counted towards participation, but not towards extra credit.

There are two kinds of responses required for this class. Tuesdays are passage posts (**up to 5** posts). Thursdays are written reviews (**up to 5** posts).

TUESDAY Passage Posting x 5
Select one passage from the reading that stands out to you. Briefly discuss what you find interesting about the passage. Written posts must not exceed 250 words; video messages must not exceed 2.5 minutes. Posts will be graded based on the originality of the passages and relevance of the reflection. *Due on Canvas discussion on Monday before midnight.*

THURSDAY Written Reviews x 5
Write about a concept that you've learned in the week or other outstanding questions that you'd like to discuss. You also have the option of responding to a question posed by one of your peers. Written posts must not exceed 250 words; video messages must not exceed 2.5 minutes. Posts will be graded based on the depth of the reflection and level of engagement with the course material. *Due on Canvas discussion on Wednesday before midnight.*

Final Project

Content
Your final Assignment can be a creative narrative piece or a research paper based on an experience you have had with medicine, whether as a patient, caregiver, intern, shadow student, emergency medical services member, or other role. For instance, if you have a personal experience with mental illness, you can choose to research on the history of American asylums to write a piece of historical fiction. Or you can produce a series of cartoons satirizing health care propaganda. Or you can develop a piece of speculative fiction on what single-payer healthcare would look like from the perspective of an undocumented immigrant. Your topic must be approved by the instructor beforehand. Assignments will be assessed based on demonstration of active critique either implicitly in the form of your work or explicitly through footnotes.

Form
You will have a choice of expressive media for your assignment. You can choose to either produce a written piece, which includes a work of fiction, non-fiction, research paper, poetry, or a play; or, painting, sculpture, graphic novel, short film, or music composition.

Your final assignment must come in three parts:

1. **Abstract** (300 words): Introduce your piece to a broader audience, your intentions behind it, your sources, your inspiration, and your process of creating it.
2. **Main Body/Content** (up to 1500 words for essays, 3-4 minutes for film/music): You will show your own interpretation/process of your piece.
3. **References:** Include up to 5 citations in Chicago style from scholars engaging with topics in the medical humanities.

Final Project Deadlines

You will be divided into 10 groups of 6. In each group, find a partner. Discuss if you want to work on similar topics or similar genres for your assignment. You will peer-review each other's work in pairs and present your ideas as a group. You are allowed to reach out to more members in your group for peer review, and as a reviewer, review up to 2 projects in your group. You will submit different parts of your assignments according to the following deadlines:

PART 1: Express *due 9/17 on Canvas before midnight*

- Think of a medical experience that you had recently and offer in as MUCH detail as possible how things felt, smelled, tasted, looked. Allow your partner to learn as much about your style of inquiry and reflection through this piece.
- **Length:** 500 words max, or 5 minutes if an audio recording

PART 2: Proposal *due 10/1 on Canvas before midnight*

- Describe your intended content and chosen form of media. What is your topic? Which questions are guiding you? What kinds of scholarship are influencing you? What are your chosen methods?
- Do you want this to turn into a graphic novel? Short film? Short story? Will you take on historical ethnography? Actual ethnography? Write a journal article? Will you create a parody? (300 words)
- If you find that your group members are engaging in similar topics, you can share topics. Collaborations must be approved by the instructor.
- **Length:** 300 words max
- *Peer reviews should be completed and posted on Canvas within 48 hours. In your peer review, offer feedback on the intellectual scope of the proposal, its clarity, feasibility, and execution. Late submissions will be penalized according to the Late Submission Policy.*

Part 3: Outline *due 10/15 on Canvas before midnight*

- How do you plan to take on your topic? If you are producing a short story, research paper, or creative narrative piece, discuss the structure of your argument or intended flow of the piece.
- Offer a detailed description of your methods. If you are planning to create a media project, include the kinds of materials you wish to use and how you would source them. Include up to 5 academic references. If you plan to collaborate with your peers, list their individual roles.
- **Length:** 2 pages max
- *Peer reviews should be completed and posted on Canvas within 48 hours. Late submissions will be penalized according to the Late Submission Policy.*

Part 4: Draft 1 *due 10/29 on Canvas before midnight*

- Turn in a draft of your piece and its 3 parts to your group leader.
- *Peer reviews should be completed and posted on Canvas within 48 hours. Late submissions will be penalized according to the Late Submission Policy.*

Part 5: Revision & Presentation *due 11/19 on Canvas before midnight*

- Turn in your final piece and its 3 parts to your group leader. Pieces should be posted on the course Wordpress template by November 20.
- *Peer reviews should be completed and posted on Canvas within 48 hours. Late submissions will be penalized according to the Late Submission Policy*

Course Readings

INTRODUCTION: FORM AND CONTENT

8.25 Introduce yourself (quiz on Canvas)

8.27 How to Read for History https://bit.ly/3gmWwTm
How to Read a Book https://bit.ly/3gpVwOp
How to Read a Poem https://bit.ly/3jaI56y
How to Read a Comic https://bit.ly/3aOuOOl
How to Read Beyonce (from film critics) https://nyti.ms/3glaxAT

PART 1
HOSPITALS & THE INFRASTRUCTURES OF MEDICINE

DOCTORS

COVID-19 & burnout (interview & podcast & article)

9.1 **Guest:** Dr. April Carpenter
Castin, "Physical Therapy Burnout is Destroying Our Profession"

9.3 *This American Life*, "The Reprieve"

DISEASE & ILLNESS

historical arguments of medicalization & paternalism

9.8 Rosenburg, *Care for Strangers* "Introduction" and "Life on the Ward"
Rosenburg, Our Present Complaint, "Tyranny of Diagnosis"

9.10 Arthur Kleinman, "Catastrophe and Caregiving: The Failure of Medicine as an Art."
Arthur Kleinman, "Caregiving: The Odyssey of Becoming More Human."

NARRATIVE MEDICINE

the relationship between writing & medicine

9.15 **Guest:** Ricardo Nuila
"Dog Bites," Ricardo Nuila (2011)

9.17 "I am a Rock," Ricardo Nuila (2016)
Final Project Part 1: Express! Due

GRAPHIC MEDICINE

critique of bad doctors, drugs, offshoring clinical trials, & graphic genres

9.22 *Understanding Comics,* McCloud, Scott. 1994.

9.24 *The Bad Doctor,* Williams, Ian. 2015.

PART 2
PATIENTS & THE POLITICS OF CARE

DISCRIMINATION
negotiating authority

9.29 **Guest:** Yesmar S. Oyarzun
Rusert, B. (2019). Naturalizing Coercion: The Tuskegee Experiments Laboratory Life of the Plantation. In R. Benjamin (Ed.)

10.1 Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life (pp. 25–49). Duke University Press.
Final Project Part 2: Proposal Due

GENDER, SEX, SEXUALITY
transgender, pathology

10.6 **Guest:** Travis Alexander
Reading: TBD

10.8 **Reading:** TBD

MENTAL ILLNESS
domestic violence

10.13 **NO CLASS**

10.15 Carmen Maria Machado, *In the Dream House*, choose your own selection
Final Project Part 3: Outline! Due

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
bipolar, DSM history

10.20 **Guest:** Beth Semel
Beth Semel, "Do Androids Dream of Electric Speech? Listening Practices in Automated Psychiatric Assessment" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JFCeaUiXA0&feature=youtu.be

10.22 Esmé Weijun Wang, *The Collected Schizophrenias: Essays*, selections

PART 3
COMMUNITIES OF HEALTH CARE

DISABILITIES
bioethics, fertility

10.27 **Guest:** Nahum Shemi
Rapp, Rayna. 1998. "Refusing Prenatal Diagnosis: The Meanings of Bioscience in a Multicultural World." *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 23 (1): 45–70.

10.29 Margaret Lock, "Death in Technological Time: Locating the End of Meaningful Life."
Final Project Draft Due

ECONOMICS

costs, accessibility, human rights, undocumented immigrants

11. 3 **Guest:** Yamini Natarajan
"Home," Ricardo Nuila
"Poor and Uninsured," Ricardo Nuila

11.5 "Taking Care of Our Own," Ricardo Nuila
Gawande, "Overkill," in *The New Yorker*

PANDEMICS

health of publics, quarantine, government & non-government bodies

11.10 Robin Scheffler, *Contagious Cause*, *selections*

11.12 *Radiolab*, "Contagious Laughter"
https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolab/segments/91595-contagious-laughter

RELIGIONS

buddhism, buddhist medicine, de-centering hospitals

11 17 http://www.jivaka.net/philly/
"Meditation," "Healing Rituals," "Traditional Medicine," "Social Dimensions of Health"

11.19
WRAP-UP
Final Project Due

Course Resources

Reading Tips

Read before you come to class. Readings provide a shared foundation for our discussions. The materials for this course include work by anthropologists, historians, cultural theorists and philosophers. Please bring the readings to class so that we can refer to specific passages in the texts. It is highly recommended that you start reading early for weeks with heavy reading loads. Recommended readings provide additional context and theorization related to the week's theme, but there is no expectation that you will read these texts during the term. If you have any concerns about the readings, please do not hesitate to come to office hours.

Take notes (in the margins or in a separate notebook) while you read, as well as in class, as this will help you process the materials. Some questions to consider while reading:

1. What are the conditions of production of this text? (historical, geographical, etc.)
2. What are the author's central arguments or main points?
3. What evidence does the author use to support their argument?
4. What ideas or authors are being argued against?
5. What assumptions does the author rely on to make their argument?
6. Do you find the author's argument convincing? Why or why not?
7. What surprised you about the reading? What did you learn?
8. What experiences in your life, or in your research, resonate with the reading?

Safe & Health Protocol

Please be safe during COVID times and follow to the best of your ability the protocol established by your colleges if you are living on campus, or general Rice policies when you enter campus. If you need any additional health resources, please visit https://coronavirus.rice.edu/health-resources

Disability Resource Center

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Disability Resource Center (Allen Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me on the **first week of classes** to discuss your accommodation needs.

Technology Resources

Students attending remotely must have a working computer with a video camera, speaker and a microphone, and a working internet connection that allows them to be on video. Please test your equipment before joining class. If you have any concerns about meeting this requirement, please contact the Dean of Undergraduates. You can also request support via the Access and Opportunity Portal (HTTPS://AOP.RICE.EDU/APPLICATION). Equipment can also be borrowed from the Digital Media Commons].

Privacy

In line with FERPA REQUIREMENTS, recorded classroom discussions involving students will be available only to students officially registered and enrolled in the class. If you have concerns about appearing on these recordings, please contact the instructor ahead of time.

Some instructors may desire or plan to use recordings from this class for another purpose. In such situations, and in line with FERPA REQUIREMENTS, the instructor may ask students to consider signing individualized consent FORMS. Students who do not provide written consent must be de-identified and/or omitted from all recordings.

Title IX Responsible Employee Notification

Rice University is a diverse community guided by the values of responsibility, integrity, community, and excellence. These values can only thrive in an environment that is free from sexual harassment and sexual misconduct. Rice is committed to maintaining and strengthening educational, working and living environments where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sexual harassment or misconduct of any kind. *As the instructor and a responsible employee, I am required by Title IX to disclose all incidents of non-consensual interpersonal behaviors to the Title IX Coordinator on campus.*

- https://safe.rice.edu/
- https://policy.rice.edu/828

Writing Support

If you would like to schedule a consultation with the Writing and Communication program, please check out their resources here: https://pwc.rice.edu/center-academic-and-professional-communication

I highly recommend reaching out and scheduling an appointment to sharpen your writing (even professor need help and the PWC is an amazing resource). Appointments can be scheduled after September 8th.